

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 /095 W
-----242338Z 076162 /14

R 241250Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5454
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3913

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IN, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET REACTION TO INDIAN ELECTION RESULTS

SUMMARY: SOVIET MEDIA HAVE REPORTED THE INDIAN ELECTION RESULTS
WITH SOMETHING LESS THAN ENTHUSIASM. IN THE ONLY IMPLIED COMMENTARY
THUS FAR THEY BLAMED THE CONGRESS DEFEAT ON "MISTAKES" AND THE
LACK OF UNITY OF "PROGRESSIVE" FORCES. SOVIET OBSERVERS, IN
PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, HAVE EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THE OUTCOME BUT
ARE UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES FOR INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS.
IN OUR VIEW, THE SOVIETS WILL SWALLOW HARD BUT WILL SEEK TO
PUT THE BEST FACE FORWARD IN SEEKING TO PRESERVE ONE OF THEIR
MOST IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS. END SUMMARY.
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1. SOVIET MEDIA HAVE REPORTED THE OUTCOME IN SHORT ITEMS
GIVING THE FACTUAL DETAILS AND OFFERING NO DIRECT COMMENTARY.
THE ONLY IMPLIED COMMENT WAS IN AN IZVESTIYA (MARCH 22) ITEM
BY I. KOVALEV FROM DELHI, WHICH CITED "LOCAL OBSERVERS" BLAMING
THE CONGRESS DEFEAT ON "MISTAKES AND EXCESSES" RESULTING
FROM THE EMERGENCY. "LEFTIST CIRCLES" ALSO REPORTEDLY CITED

THE "NEGATIVE ROLE" PLAYED BY THE DISUNITY OF "DEMOCRATIC AND PATRIOTIC FORCES." MORE SPECIFICALLY, KOVALEV SAID THAT JANATA BENEFITED FROM THE CONGRESS' REFUSAL TO COOPERATE WITH THE CPI IN MOST STATES, AND CLAIMED THAT CONGRESS CANDIDATES SUCCEEDED WHERE THE CPI SUPPORTED THEM.

2. IN A SHORT CONVERSATION ON MARCH 23, YURIY FILIPPOV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE SOVIET MFA'S SOUTH ASIA DIVISION, TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE RESULTS WERE A "BIG SURPRISE", ESPECIALLY MRS. GANDHI'S LOSS OF HER OWN SEAT. HE DID NOT COMMENT ON THE LIKELY COMPOSITION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT, BUT SAID THAT THE OUTCOME WAS "VERY SIGNIFICANT" AND THAT IT COULD HAVE "VERY IMPORTANT" CONSEQUENCES FOR INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS. HE WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, COMMENT ON WHAT HE EXPECTED THOSE CONSEQUENCES TO BE.

3. IN ANOTHER CONVERSATION ON MARCH 23, EUGENIY PRIMAKOV, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SOVIET THINK-TANK IMEMO, TOLD POL COUNSELOR THAT HE EXPECTED THAT THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE CHANGES IN "ACCENTS" OF SOVIET-INDIAN RELATIONS, BUT THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT "BASIC CHANGES" FOR THE WORSE IN THE RELATIONSHIP. PRIMAKOV INDICATED THAT THE "OBJECTIVE REALITIES" REQUIRED THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS, REGARDLESS OF WHO THE LEADERS WERE. TURNING TO WHAT HE CALLED "GLOBAL CONSIDERATIONS", PRIMAKOV SAID AGAIN THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT MAJOR SHIFTS AS A RESULT OF THE ELECTION. ASKED WHETHER THIS MEANT CHINA, PRIMAKOV NODDED ASSENT.

4. COMMENT: THE SOVIETS, NOT SURPRISINGLY, ARE TRYING TO
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PUT THE BEST FACE ON WHAT THEY CAN ONLY SEE AS A MAJOR POLITICAL SHOCK WHICH CARRIES PROFOUND IMPLICATIONS FOR ONE OF THEIR KEY NON-COMMUNIST RELATIONSHIPS. THE IZVESTIYA ACCOUNT MAKES A SOMEWHAT LAME ATTEMPT TO SAY WHY THE SHOCK HAPPENED, AND WE EXPECT TO SEE ADDITIONAL EXPLANATIONS ALONG SIMILAR LINES. THE COMMENTS BY THE TWO SOVIETS ARE OBVIOUSLY VERY PRELIMINARY AND CAUTIOUS, AND DO NOT REFLECT A CONSISTENT LINE ON HOW TO EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR MOSCOW.

5. THE PROBABLE SOVIET REACTION, IN THE NEAR TERM, IS TO WAIT AND WATCH HOW THE NEW LEADERSHIP SORTS ITSELF OUT. WE WOULD ALSO EXPECT SOME PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS OF CONSISTENT SOVIET SUPPORT FOR INDIA AND THE USUAL GREETINGS TO THE NEW LEADERS. BEYOND THIS, WE EXPECT MOSCOW TO TRY TO MAKE SOME AMENDS FOR ITS INTENSELY NEGATIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS ABOUT THE JANATA PARTY IN THE WEEKS LEADING UP TO THE ELECTION, AND TO PROVE FOR SIGNS THAT THE NEW LEADERSHIP DOES NOT PLAN DRASTIC CHANGES IN FOREIGN POLICY. THE KEY QUESTION, FROM

MOSCOW'S PERSPECTIVE, WILL BE HOW TO PRESERVE AS MUCH AS
POSSIBLE OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP NOW THAT THE
KEY PERSONALITY OF MRS. GANDHI, WHO PRESIDED OVER THE
DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IN INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS IN THE LAST
SIX YEARS, IS NO LONGER POLITICALLY RELEVANT.
TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ELECTION RESULTS
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 24-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW03913
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770101-1080
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770327/aaaaawta.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3009829
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET REACTION TO INDIAN ELECTION RESULTS SUMMARY: SOVIET MEDIA HAVE REPORTED THE INDIAN ELECTION RESULTS WITH SOMETHING LESS THAN ENTHUSIASM. IN T HE ONLY
TAGS: PFOR, IN, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/349bf0b2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009